

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 WELLIN 04195 102351Z

15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

----- 052430

R 100420Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2294

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 4195

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NZ

SUBJ: LABOUR'S PARLIAMENTARY WALKOUT: THE MOYLE AFFAIR

1. SUMMARY: LABOUR MP'S WALKED OUT OF PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 4 FOLLOWING A PARLIAMENTARY REMARK BY PRIME MINISTER MULDOON ALLEGING THAT ONE OF THEM (FORMER LABOUR MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, COLIN MOYLE) HAD BEEN PICKED UP BY THE POLICE FOR HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY. STATEMENTS AND INNUENDOS WHICH FOLLOWED, INCLUDING THE ROLE OF THE POLICE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF RAW DATA FROM POLICE FILES TO THE PRIME MINISTER, HAVE KEPT THE INCIDENT BOILING THROUGHOUT THE WEEK. MULDOON'S REMARK ASSURES HIS STATURE AS A GUT FIGHTER PAR EXCELLENCE BUT MAY ULTIMATELY HAVE A DAMAGING IMPACT ON HIS STATURE AS GOVERNMENT LEADER. END SUMMARY.

2. OPPOSITION LEADER MP'S WALKED OUT OF PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 4 IN THE CULMINATION OF A HARSH EXCHANGE BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER MULDOON AND FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER COLIN MOYLE. THE EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE DURING DEBATE ON AN APPROPRIATIONS BILL ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN URGENCY AND THE OPPOSITION WAS SEEKING DELAY. DURING THE DEBATE, ACCORDING TO REPORTS, A LABOUR MP, WHO IS A CHURCH MINISTER, ATTACKED MULDOON. MULDOON THEN DESCRIBED THE LABOURITE AS THE QUOTE RED REVEREND -- THE REPRESENTATIVE IN THIS COUNTRY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. UNQUOTE. WHEN THE SPEAKER ASKED HIM TO WITHDRAW, MULDOON REPLIED THAT HE ASSUMED THE REVEREND HAD A CONSCIENCE, INVITED HIM TO CONSULT IT AND WITHDREW HIS REMARK.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 WELLIN 04195 102351Z

3. MULDOON THEN TURNED TO MOYLE, WHO APPARENTLY HAD BEEN LAUGHING, AND SAID HE WOULD FORGIVE HIS "EFFEMINATE GIGGLES" BECAUSE HE KNEW MOYLE'S BACKGROUND TOO. RISING TO A POINT OF ORDER, MOYLE ASKED THE SPEAKER IF IT WOULD BE IN ORDER TO ACCUSE THE PRIME MINISTER OF BEING A MEMBER OF AN ACCOUNTING FIRM THAT WAS GUILTY OF ILLEGAL PRACTICES. MULDOON REPLIED WITH A QUERY WHETHER IT WOULD BE IN ORDER TO ACCUSE THE MEMBER FOR MANGERE (MOYLE) OF BEING PICKED UP BY THE POLICE FOR HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITIES. MOYLE SHOUTED "THAT'S AN ABSOLUTE LIE", AND THE ENTIRE OPPOSITION, LED BY OPPOSITION LEADER ROWLING, WALDED OUT. NATIONAL THEN PROCEEDED TO PASS THE LEGISLATION IN TWO MINUTES WITHOUT FURTHER DEBATE.

4. ON NOVEMBER 5 THE OPPOSITION RETURNED TO THE HOUSE AND MOYLE DELIVERED A PERSONAL STATEMENT CATEGORICALLY DENYING MULDOON'S ACCUSATION AND OFFERING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW SOME 18 MONTHS EARLIER, WHILE ON HIS WAY HOME FROM PARLIAMENT, HE HAD STOPPED AND TALKED WITH A MAN HE THOUGHT TO BE A "CAT BURGLAR" BUT WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A POLICE CONSTABLE. MOYLE SAID HE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED THE INCIDENT WITH THE ASSISTANT POLICE COMMISSIONER AND HAD HAPPILY AGREED TO LEAVE FUTURE CRIME DETECTION TO THE POLICE. THE INCIDENT WAS COMPLETELY INNOCENT, MOYLE SAID, BUT ON REFLECTION MUST BE THE ONE ON WHICH MULDOON'S STATEMENT WAS BASED.

5. IN A PERSONAL STATEMENT OF HIS OWN WHICH FOLLOWED, MULDOON SAID THAT HE AND THE MINISTER OF POLICE HAD CONSULTED WITH THE COMMISSIONER AND THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF POLICE TO DISCUSS THE MOYLE POLICE FILE. MULDOON SAID THERE WERE "SERIOUS DISCREPANCIES" BETWEEN MOYLE'S STATEMENT AND THE FILE AND HE ASKED FOR MOYLE'S APPROVAL FOR THE WHOLE POLICE FILE TO BE TABLED. INCREDIBLY, MULDOON ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD SOME OF THE FILE'S CONTENTS. AT THIS, THE OPPOSITION AGAIN WALKED OUT.

6. SINCE NOVEMBER 5, THE HALLS OF PARLIAMENT AND THE EDITORIAL PAGES OF NEW ZEALAND MEDIA HAVE BEEN AWASH WITH REPORTS, INTERVIEWS, ACCUSATIONS, DENIALS AND EDITORIALS ON THE "MOYLE AFFAIR". AS COULD BE EXPECTED CRITICISM HAS CENTERED ON MULDOON'S PROPENSITY TO "MOUTH FROM THE HIP" AND THE INAPPROPRIATE USE OF RAW POLICE DATA. THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE CONFIRMED THAT DIFFERENCES

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 WELLIN 04195 102351Z

DO EXIST BETWEEN MOYLE'S STATEMENT AND THE POLICE FILES BUT DENIED THAT THE FILE HAS EVER BEEN DISCLOSED TO EITHER MULDOON OR THE MINISTER OF POLICE. HE FURTHER SAID THAT A REPORT ON THE INCIDENT WAS PROVIDED TO THE MINISTER OF POLICE UNDER THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT. (BUT THE FORMER MINISTER OF POLICE SAYS HE CAN REMEMBER NOTHING OF IT SINCE IT OCCURRED 18 MONTHS AGO.) BY MID-WEEK THE OPPOSITION LEADER HAD CALLED FOR A FULL JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO HOW THE NATIONAL PARTY OBTAINED INFORMATION

FROM POLICE FILES AND THE PRESS WAS SHOWING FEW SIGNS OF
BOREDOM WITH THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

7. COMMENT: THE BRIEF EXCHANGE ON NOVEMBER 4, WHILE OUTRAGEOUS
AND PROVOCATIVE, MIGHT ALSO HAVE HELD SUFFICIENT SUBSTANCE TO MAKE
THE PRIME MINISTER'S CUT ESPECIALLY DEEP. COLIN MOYLE HAS BEEN THE
SUBJECT TO RUMORS IN THE PAST, BOTH IN PARLIAMENT AND IN PUBLIC,
CONCERNING HIS ALLEGED HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITIES. WHEN ANUNNAMED LABOUR
MP WAS ARRESTED EARLY THIS YEAR FOR INDECENT ASSAULT ON TWO YOUNG
MEN, MANY PARLIAMENTARIANS INITIALLY AND ERRONEOUSLY CONCLUDED IT
WAS MOYLE. ALL OF THAT ASIDE, THE INCIDENT ONCE AGAIN DEMONSTRATED
THAT MULDOON IS UNRIVALED AS A GUT FIGHTER. HE WAS NEVER IN DANGER
OF BEING REGARDED AS A NATIONAL LEADER OF STATESMANLIKE QUALITIES,
BUT MULDOON'S REMARKS FURTHER CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC'S ALREADY
LOW REGARD FOR THE QUALITY OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. (ONE
GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHER REFERRED TO PARLIAMENT AS BECOMING A "PIG
STY" AND AT LEAST FOUR GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS ARE KNOWN TO
BE PRESSING FOR URGENT PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS.) FOR THE FIRST
TIME SINCE NATIONAL'S VICTORY ELEVEN MONTHS AGO, THERE HAS BEEN
WIDESPREAD PUBLIC QUESTIONING AND SIGNIFICANT PRESS COMMENT ON
WHETHER OR NOT MULDOON IS THE RIGHT MAN TO BE PRIME MINISTER.
MULDOON HIMSELF AND THE NATIONAL PARTY PRESIDENT HAVE BEEN FORCED
TO STATEMENTS THAT HE IS "THE BEST MAN" FOR THE JOB.

8. NO ONE SUGGESTS THAT MULDOON'S LEADERSHIP IS IN DANGER,
BUT MOST SEEM TO AGREE THAT IT HAS BEEN ERODED. THE CONSENSUS,
EVEN AMONG MANY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS, IS THAT HIS INSTINCTS FOR ONE-
UP-MANSHIP HAVE, IN THIS INSTANCE, CARRIED HIM ONE STEP TOO FAR.
IN THE FACE OF THE HEAVY NATIONAL MAJORITY AND THE SHARP MULDOON
TONGUE, THE OPPOSITION HAS RESORTED INCREASINGLY TO OBSTRUCTIONISM
AND CONTEMPT. THEY HAVE REPEATEDLY, AND WITH INCREASING SUCCESS,
BAITED MULDOON IN THE HOPES THAT HE WILL FINALLY UTTER SUCH OUTRAGES
THAT HE WILL BE FORCED BY PUBLIC REACTION TO STEP DOWN AS PARTY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 WELLIN 04195 102351Z

LEADER. WHILE SOME BELIEVE THIS IS PLAYING MULDOON'S GAME,
PARLIAMENT'S CLAIMS TO DIGNITY HAVE ALSO BEEN THE VICTIM.
IT IS A CERTAINTY THAT THE MOYLE INCIDENT WILL BE FREQUENTLY
RECALLED, BY BOTH SIDES, IN THE MONTHS BETWEEN NOW AND THE
1978 ELECTIONS.
SELDEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976WELLIN04195
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760419-1200
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761160/aaaacaa0.tel
Line Count: 160
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <21 SEP 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOUR'S PARLIAMENTARY WALKOUT: THE MOYLE AFFAIR
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NZ, (MULDOON, ROBERT D), (MOYLE, COLIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006